

Blaxhall Village Newsletter



Spring 2020

A Picture Paints 1000 Words



First and foremost, can I say I hope this newsletter finds all our villagers safe and well. Needless to say, it's been a period of unprecedented uncertainty and disruption for everyone, so apologies if some of you are receiving this a little later than usual for a Spring edition. There is, of course, rather less 'news' than usual, but after sounding out several residents the prevailing view was clearly to proceed with a Spring edition, so here we are!

At this point I must say a big thank you to everyone who has sent in their photos, as well as other material, including experiences of coping with lockdown and surviving the virus.

Indeed, we've received considerably more material than can be fitted in, so fingers crossed I've included something from all of you.

Page 2	Church News
Page 3	The Ship
Page 4	Council News
Page 5	History
Page 6	This & That
Page 7	More This & That!
Page 8	BPC Information



A Message from our Rector, Rev Rachel

During these last few weeks of lockdown it has been quite challenging for me to feel part of each community when I am so used to driving through villages, stopping at parish homes or the church and so on. Suddenly I am here in Stratford St Andrew and you are there in Blaxhall. Not long ago I drove over and had a walk around the churchyard and thought of you all as I stood there in the village. Each week I pray for one village a day and I have continued to do this during lock down. I have also been sending an email out each day which has been cascaded to many in the benefice and beyond. If you would like to receive this, then speak to someone on the Church Council who can forward it to you. In addition each week I have made a video of our Sunday service. We have hymns, different people read the bible and say our prayers and Bill Sokolis and I are taking turns for the sermon. This video is on YouTube under Alde River Benefice. As it is a video we are able to edit it to add the music and various contributors. Even if you don't have access to the internet it is possible to see the video thanks to the skills of Shane Pictor who can make a dvd or audio cd for you to use. (email shane@blaxhall.com or phone 01728 688205).

I have heard that those of you in the village who can, are caring for those in the village who can't shop and so on. It has been wonderful to hear all the stories of how communities have helped each other out and kept people cheerful under such hard circumstances.

We are so sad that social and fundraising activities have had to be cancelled in all of the villages. These ways of keeping our friendships alive are hard to bear and from the point of view of the church in addition to that, we are going to struggle to pay for the basic needs of the church this year let alone deal with the urgent need to carry out the repairs that you are all aware of. Having said that, we are very blessed to live in such a wonderful part of the world and with summer around the corner there is much to be glad about and much to look forward to.

With love to you all
Rev Rachel

Hello! Do you need any help?

A group of us in Blaxhall would like to help anyone who is self-isolating due to COVID-19.

We can help with:-

- Getting & delivering shopping or prescriptions
- Phoning you for a friendly chat
- Posting some mail
- Walking your dog/s

Please phone me, Sue Cowling, on 07941 795510, a volunteer will then contact you to arrange the help you need.

Stay well and safe.



Meetings

It might have slipped past everyone that the parish council did not have its usual bi-monthly meeting in May. We could have had a meeting via 'Zoom' but as there was nothing urgent on the agenda it was decided not to have the meeting as we are allowed to do. We will take a view on the July meeting so watch the notice boards.

Village Hall

It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. The Village Hall has obviously been closed and will remain so until the lockdown ends, causing loss of income. As a small business it transpires we are entitled to a government grant. Thanks to Joyce for discovering this and filling out the forms, we are now in receipt of £10,000. A great boost to our village hall. Well done Joyce.

There will be no summer ball this year and the Fete is extremely unlikely. We will, I am sure, have some sort of Village celebration to mark the end of lockdown. We welcome any suggestions that you might have and we look forward to all meeting together again.

Graham

On a Personal Note - Friends, Jetlag and Lovely Blaxhall

On the 20th of March Naomi and I returned from a lovely albeit slightly foreshortened trip to Australia and New Zealand. Arriving home in the early evening (thanks to good friends Martin and David who between them got us back from Heathrow) we came past the welcoming lights of the Ship. It would have been very tempting to call in and say hello to folks as we had been away for nearly 6 weeks, but having spent 24 hours travelling, jet lag, exhaustion and the decision to self isolate sent us home for an early night. We recovered over the weekend but on the Monday I started to feel unwell. One week later I should have been getting better but I felt worse so I had a telephone consultation with the doctor who said I had Covid19 (yet to be confirmed).

Eight weeks later I am almost back to normal but it has been a bit of a struggle. My main thought has been that if we had not been so tired we would have gone into the Ship, hugged friends and shaken a lot of hands thus spreading the virus to as many other Blaxhall folk as we could. How easily a small decision can make such a dramatic effect. How many people could have been infected by just one ill advised visit and how many people could have suffered a worse fate than me.

This all goes to show how vigilant we all have to be during these critical times.

I have always felt so lucky to live in Blaxhall but never so much so than at this time of social deprivation. The beautiful walks and cycle rides **(continued on page 6)**

The Ship



Hi from Mags, Ken & Dwayne at The Blaxhall Ship.

Most of you will know us already, we all have been here since late January and lockdown together since the 20th March. We have had 7 weeks of normal trading, and what great fun we have had, and then currently heading towards the 10th week of lockdown.

We quickly adapted to try and at least have some form of revenue stream to offset a small part of the high monthly operating cost of a rural pub.

Since the start of lockdown, we have offered fruit and veg boxes, meat and general items, for collection or delivery. The majority of these items we pass on at cost. We also offer takeaway food again collect or delivery. Also take away beer, lager and cider.



We have also continued our chalets but imposed stringent Safe Method of Working Instructions for both staff and clients. The first stage of this is to ensure that clients are essential or key workers when they book, we turned away many a tourist and or virus escapees.

The lockdown period has seen us busy working on improvements and upkeep maintenance. We have seen a steady growth in our takeaway operations, and now deliver as far as Woodbridge and Leiston.

We are extremely grateful for all the support the kind folk of Blaxhall have extended us.

It's been a surreal time, we have attempted to offer small crumbs of humour (groan) through our Facebook page, and our net is spreading with followers in the USA, Australia and South Africa. Once we reopen normal service on Facebook will return.

We have done 4 podcasts to chronicle the lockdown period. We have been fortunate to have been included in an article both electronically and hard copy of the East Anglian.

Just under a month ago we reluctantly submitted a casting video, and after 4 Skype Calls and numerous telephone calls we were advised we had been selected for filming. Long and the short of it, on Sunday 3rd of May an advert was filmed for Lloyds Bank at The Ship. Then we had to wait 7 days to see if any of our filming was to be included. Yes, it was used, and is currently running on mainstream TV and radio they used 3 seconds of 5-hour filming!

Enough for now, thank you again for all your support, keep safe and healthy.

Big virtual hugs and kisses from The Blaxhall Ship Team.

A Reminder of How Lucky We Are

If the events of the last 3 months have done anything, beyond poking a stick at my stress levels, it's been to remind me how lucky we all are the vast majority of the time. The very idea of a deadly affliction that can emerge from nowhere, travel the world and reach little old us here in the backwoods of Blaxhall is something that few residents will be able to remember. Yet it's within living memory that a couple who produced half a dozen children would almost expect at least one to be lost before adulthood, and only just beyond living memory that the Spanish Flu killed 230,000 Britains from a population a third smaller than we have now.

Looking back at some of Blaxhall's records we see just how much more impact deadly disease had on every day life. Plucking a handful of examples from the area public health reports we see a diptheria outbreak in 1893, scarlet fever in 1897 and 1899, and a measles outbreak that closed the school in January 1900. The school was closed again, for 3 weeks, in July of the same year when measles returned, while diptheria was back again in 1913 and scarlet fever reared its head in 1915. Then of course, there was cholera, tuberculosis, typhus, typhoid, influenza and whooping cough. All of these could, and did, kill both adults and children on a regular basis.

As if dodging that broadside of badies wasn't tricky enough, you could still die from an infection begun by the simplist of nicks to the skin.

Children especially found themselves up against no shortage of other challenges as they attempted to negotiate a path to adulthood. The medical officer reported a case of 7 children sleeping in a room less than 12 feet square in one 1900 household, but then the average Blaxhall farm-labourer's cottage at the time was a glorified one-up one-down semi with various outhouses tacked on the back, sometimes in brick but often in wood or corrugated iron, so with large families the norm such overcrowding must have been relatively common.

Outside the house, and deadly disease aside, there were still many ways for our youngsters to reach an untimely end. Six year-old Daniel Sawyer, for example, was killed when he was struck by the sail of the windmill, where his father was working. Two more tragedies that come to mind

involving children and the workplace are the deaths of Gerard Ling and Joseph Row. 11 year- old Gerard was riding on one of the horses used to turn the huge 5ft French burr mill stones at Lime Tree Farm when he jammed his head against part of the machinery, dying almost instantly as a result. Joseph, aged twelve, was taking a seed drill along the road to Langham bridge when the horse was spooked and took off down the road, dragging the drill over young Joseph and killing him with a blow to the head.

Finally, travelling full circle and returning to world-changing pandemics, we can't sign off without mentioning the plague. Contrary to popular myth, there is no empirical evidence that bubonic plague caused Blaxhall's population to shift away from the church, although absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Either way, plague would certainly have reached Blaxhall at some point over the centuries, and while our village's encounters may be hazy, one thing we do know is that Suffolk was home to the last outbreak in England, when some 14 people died in Trimley, Shotley and Freston in 1910.

Blaxhall Community Library

Venue - YHA porch
Open - 24/7

Books and jigsaw are now
available for borrowing.
Please also add any of
your own books or jigsaws
to the bookshelf.

ENJOY!

Continued from page 3 ... accessible from our front door have been a delight. Standing on Langham Bridge watching the water and the wildlife lift the spirits however isolated we might be. Walking around the village and talking to more people than usual (social distancing of course) has been a joy as well as the lack of traffic.

The sense of people helping others whether be with shopping or just contact is palpable. This is a village to be proud of. Please stay safe.

Graham



We've received a raft of great photos this month, sadly more than we can fit in, but they may yet emerge in future issues. Meanwhile, here's a lovely shot of the childrens Easter Garden and, another of Malcolm's excellent drone shots, looking north from the church.

Things Could Be Worse!

Maggie Jennings wrote the following passage for the newsletter back in early April, but it's no less true now, even as we head into June and restrictions begin to lift.



I don't know when you will get to read this, but it was written, and the photos taken during the time of Isolation.

How lucky we are to live in such close proximity to such a beautiful open space. Unlike many city dwellers, we are able to walk from home to get our exercise, amidst tranquil and beautiful scenery. Sometimes I would just walk the circumference of the



Common, and at others, cross the road and on towards Tunstall Forest.

These wide grassy paths offer plenty of space to observe social distancing if you do happen to see another walker. On one 5 mile walk, I only saw two people, and that was as I neared the end of the walk.

During my walking, I saw an owl, other birds of prey, and a herd of deer about 20 in number.....and very few people!!

This & That

We've received photographs of the VE day 75 year anniversary flags from a number of different snappers on their daily walks around the village, so with any luck between them we might just have got them all!





Parish Councillors

Graham Bowles	01728 688192 (Chairman)	Karen Baker	01728 688200
Shane Pictor	01728 688205	Ray Herring	01728 746337
Jonathan Cutting	01728 688003	Mark Oakley	01728 687507
Joanne Peters	01394 459400 (Parish Clerk)	Maggie Jennings	01728 687689

Suffolk Coastal District Councillor - Ray Herring 07885 249218

ray.herring@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Suffolk County Councillor - Andrew Reid 07545 423799 andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk

Copies of minutes and agendas can be found at <http://blaxhall.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/>

Parish Council meetings are held in the Village Hall at 7.30 and are open to all parishioners, the public and press. The 2020 dates are: **Wednesday 8th January, Wednesday 4th March, Wednesday 6th May, Wednesday 1st July, Wednesday 2nd September and Wednesday 4th November.**

Community Transport – “Connecting Communities” **01728 635938** The service booking line operates 08.45am to 4pm, Mon-Fri

Blaxhall Commons & Open Spaces Charitable Trust – www.blaxhallcommonstrust.org
For contact details of all trustees ring Mark Oakley 01728 687507

The **Mobile Library** comes to Blaxhall, and stops at **The Youth Hostel 9.35 – 10am** calling every 4 weeks on Wednesdays: **2019 dates: 31 July, 28 August, 25 September, 23 October, 20 November, 18 December.**

Large print, Audio & Childrens' books, also CDs and DVDs are available for a small charge. Contact Pete Wells or Helen Hudson on help@suffolklibraries.co.uk, visit the website <http://suffolkreads.onesuffolk.net/libraries-and-mobiles/> or phone **01473 584563**

To put something in the Village Noticeboard, please ring Graham Bowles 01728 688192
To put something in the Newsletter email to shane@blaxhall.com tel. 01728 688205

Allotment information contact Sophie Martin on 07724 356916,
Blaxhall.Allotments@gmail.com

Deadline for next Newsletter - 30th July